

Summary of 8-29-12 interview of Gayle Bohlmann

Interview and summary by Thomas M. Patton, Deputy Attorney General

Bohlmann's state employment career spanned 33 years. She started in the 1970s at the Employment Development Department, and spent 27 years with the Department of Parks and Recreation from approximately 1983 until 2010. (Gayle Bohlmann transcript (GBtr), pp. 6-8.)

Bohlmann started out as a personnel assistant, was thereafter promoted to maintenance supervisor, and later served as administrative officer at Folsom Lake. Bohlmann moved to headquarters in Sacramento in approximately 1995, where she managed the contracting office in the Administrative Services Division. (GBtr, pp. 8-10.) She later managed a consolidated contracting and business services section, and eventually assumed responsible over contracts, procurement, property, inventory, warehousing, and central records. (GBtr, p. 14-16.)

Bohlmann was ultimately promoted to assistant deputy director for administrative services, and held that position from June 2009 until retiring on June 30, 2010. (GBtr, pp. 17-19.) In 2011 Bohlmann began working as a retired annuitant and recently served temporarily as District Administrator for the Sierra District office in Tahoma. (GBtr, pp. 6 and 21.)

As manager of business services, Bohlmann originally reported to Tom Domich who was the assistant deputy director for administrative services in the early 2000s. The assistant deputy directors of administrative services with whom she worked were Domich, Rob Boriskin, and Olaya Paschal, who reported in turn to the deputy director of administrative services. The succession of such deputy directors during Bohlmann's time at headquarters included Denzil Verardo, Ron Brean, Michael Harris, Keith Demetrak, and Manuel Lopez. (GBtr, pp. 21-22.)

When asked about her involvement in budget matters, Bohlmann stated she had nothing to do with budgets. (GBtr, pp. 26 and 38.) She indicated that only in her final years as business services manager did she even have a budget. Before then the bills from business services were simply paid by administrative services. Bohlmann further stated that in her final years as business services manager she began receiving some financial information through then-assistant deputy director Rob Boriskin, and remarked that Boriskin "really wanted transparency. He was all about transparency and wasn't able to accomplish that." (GBtr, pp. 26-28.)

When asked why, Bohlmann explained that before Manuel Lopez became deputy director of administrative services, the budget section had reported to the assistant deputy director. Thus former budget officer Becky Brown reported to assistant deputy director Tom Domich, and likewise Manuel Lopez, while serving as budget officer, reported to the assistant deputy director. Later, when Lopez became deputy director of administrative services, and given Lopez's background handling budgets, the budget section report directly to Lopez. (GBtr, pp. 29-30.) Bohlmann opined that Boriskin's resulting perspective was that it was difficult for him to achieve the level of information and transparency he was working towards. (GBtr, pp. 31-32.)

Bohlmann further explained that her understanding was that Lopez consistently provided financial reports directly to director Ruth Coleman, basically bypassing both Rob Boriskin and Michael Harris. Bohlmann indicated Boriskin complained about this on more than one occasion, and Boriskin was frustrated over his inability to obtain information from Lopez and the fact that Lopez would bypass him and go straight to the director. (GBtr, pp. 30-33, and 36.)

When asked if she had heard the reports regarding disparities in the accounting reports the Department had submitted to the Controller's Office and the budget reports submitted to the Department of Finance, Bohlmann state that she "was just as surprised as everybody else about finding twenty million, fifty-four million dollars, whatever." (GBtr, pp. 37-38.)

Bohlmann stated that while she served as assistant deputy director the accounting, business services, and training sections reported to her, while everyone else in administrative services, in particular the budget section, reported to deputy director Lopez. (GBtr, p. 40.) She indicated this reporting scenario was different from when Michael Harris had been deputy director of administrative services. During Harris's time as deputy director, labor relations, personnel, and training reported to Harris, and the financial sections-accounting and budgets-reported to the assistant deputy director. This had been the reporting scenario for many years, going back to the time Tom Domich served as assistant deputy director. (GBtr, p. 43.) The change in reporting occurred when Lopez took over as deputy director and Olaya Paschal became assistant deputy director. (GBtr, p. 45.)

Bohlmann stated that Boriskin never discussed any issues with her concerning surplus monies or discrepancies in financial reports. (GBtr, p. 47.) Although Bohlmann was

consistently briefed by chief accounting officer Dorothy Kroll regarding year-end account balance reports going to the controller, she did not have that same interaction with the budget officer concerning reports going to the finance department. (GBtr, pp. 48-50.) Bohlmann denied having any knowledge about the process of preparing annual fund condition reports, which the budget section would prepare for submission to the Department of Finance. (GBtr, p. 51.)

Bohlmann described Dorothy Kroll as extraordinarily competent and noted that Kroll has painstakingly laid out the process for producing year-end accounting reports so that no detail is missed. Bohlmann also gave Kroll high praise for integrity and honesty. (GBtr, pp. 53-54.)

Bohlmann similarly described Becky Brown as a person of high integrity with an “over-the-top” understanding of Department operations and the details of the budget process. She recounted that Brown knew the Department’s budget and budget process inside and out, had an excellent memory, and stated that if anyone was in a position to understand the budget and any problems associated with it, that person was Becky Brown. Bohlmann further remarked that during the years Becky Brown and Tom Domich were there they were “hand-in-hand” the experts on the budget and had that aspect of the operation “nailed.” (GBtr, pp 55-56, and 77.)

When asked if she had ever heard anything about automated pay machine revenues being directed into a reimbursement account, Bohlmann indicated that all she knew was that after starting the automated pay process, Kroll’s accounting section had some difficulty reconciling revenues. Bohlmann did not, however, profess any understanding as to where such revenues were going. (GBtr, p. 70.)

Bohlmann recalled that Cheryl Taylor later served as budget officer for a period of time, and noted that Taylor and Lopez had worked together at Caltrans. Bohlmann stated she always felt bad for Taylor because she didn’t think Lopez actually let Taylor operate as budget officer, but kept a tight grip on and essentially ran the budget office himself. (GBtr, pp. 72-73.)